

National Congress Bulletin

MARCH 1956

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Memo to Local Presidents:

THIS issue of the *Bulletin* brings you the new Action Program of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. The program is based on our administration theme, **The Family and the Community: Each Shapes the Other—The P.T.A. Serves Both.** It is a working guide for parent-teacher service to the family and the community.

- Good homes and good communities are the bulwarks of children's welfare—and of each other. Families make and mold communities. The beliefs and aspirations, the conduct and attitudes of families determine the quality of community life and the scope of community services. Good communities are the outcome of widely shared responsibility for children and their environment.

- But the community also shapes the family. A community can strengthen or weaken family life. It can help or hinder the family in its task of rearing children to be healthy, happy, useful, law-abiding citizens.

- The P.T.A. serves the family, as well as the community, when it helps create an environment that is healthful, safe, morally sound, and culturally stimulating for all. It serves both when it spurs the community to provide educational, health, recreational, and social services to meet the needs of children and families.

Action Program Structure

- With a deep awareness, then, of the ever increasing interaction and interdependence of family and community, the current program has been developed. The program structure is simple: In the left-hand column are listed specific problems and objectives bearing on the family and the community; in the right-hand column, opposite each particular

problem or objective, are suggestions for specific projects and activities that will help parent-teacher associations to solve each problem or achieve each goal.

- An architect's plan needs competent, skilled workers to transform its specifications into a material structure. At the present moment our Action Program is like such a plan. It is a "paper program" that needs your P.T.A.'s energies and skills to become a "working program." It will become a genuine Action Program as soon as P.T.A.'s put its recommendations into effect. How will you go about getting this *action* under way?

Steps To Take

1. Publicize the program as widely as possible among your members. It is also being published in the April issue

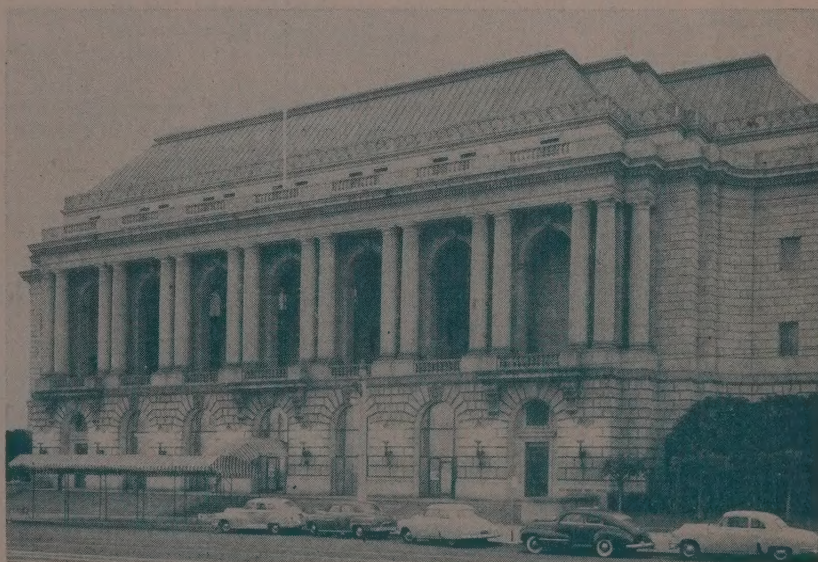
of the *National Parent-Teacher*. In addition, the National Congress is making reprints available free to state congresses on a basis of two reprints for each P.T.A. plus two hundred for the use of state board members. In the next issue of the *Bulletin* quantity prices will be quoted so that all local associations may purchase extra copies at a low nominal price.

2. Urge your executive committee to discuss the program with members and find out which problems and projects are of greatest concern and interest to them.

3. Then, as soon as possible, hold a meeting of your executive committee to develop a *local action* program geared to, or based on, the national program.

4. With the committee, study the problems and objectives listed and then *select the things that most need doing in your community.*

(Continued on page 2)



● War Memorial Opera House in San Francisco, famed as birthplace of the United Nations, is the scene of general sessions of the 1956 National Congress convention.

(Continued from page 1)

No doubt your unit is already at work on some of the projects that are described. These activities you will want to continue, perhaps expanding and strengthening them. It may be that the members of your committee will find they need more information about certain situations in the community before plans can be completed. For example, they may not know whether or not your community has adequate probation services for delinquent children or counseling services for families. Facts will be needed before action is taken.

5. When the committee has selected from the Action Program the problems and objectives of local concern, the next step is to find out the association's resources for working on them. The following questions might be considered: Have we the resources in members, money, and time to work effectively on all these projects? If not, which should have priority? Which are of most importance? Which can be deferred temporarily?

Selection of Problems and Objectives

• This discussion should lead to a careful selection of problems and objectives from the Action Program, with matching projects and activities. This list will constitute *your local unit's action program*. It will be based on the national program but will be adapted to the needs of your community—its children and its families—and suited to the interests, capacities, and resources of your unit.

• The drawing up of your action program is but the beginning of a series of challenging tasks that will draw on the skills, talents, experience, and energies of all your members. There is the task of presenting the program to the membership and the community in an attractive way to stimulate membership participation and create public interest and support. Which of your members has a knack for presenting ideas graphically? Who among them can devise interest-provoking themes and slogans?

Assignment of Responsibilities

• Another task is the assignment of responsibility for each project. Which committee or committees should undertake it? Does it require the creation of a new committee? Which members would have most interest in working on it? Fathers? Mothers? Teachers?

Others? What qualifications should committee members have? Would the specialized knowledge of businessmen, professors, doctors, social service workers, or recreation leaders be useful?

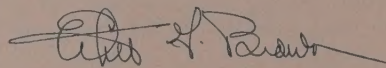
Community Resources

• There are other questions to be considered in relation to each project. Is it a project that can best be accomplished through cooperation with other organizations and agencies? What people and resources in the community would be helpful in this activity?

As your unit works out the answers to these and other questions, your action program will be under way.

Over-all Goal: Service to Children and Youth

• Thus the national Action Program can be used to develop your own P.T.A.'s program of service to the family and the community. Into the national program have gone the knowledge and experience of many parent-teacher leaders. Out of this program, we are confident, will come intelligent, informed local action to strengthen the family and the community—action of immeasurable benefit to children. For children live in families, and families live in communities. What we enable the family and the community to become, we enable the child to become.



MRS. ROLLIN BROWN, President
National Congress of Parents and Teachers

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NOMINATED FOR NATIONAL OFFICES



Mrs. L. E. Burr



Mrs. Ralph Hobbs



Mrs. Ruth Gagliardo



Mrs. Jennelle
Moorhead

• At our national convention in San Francisco next May four national officers will be elected. The following list of nominees has been presented by the nominating committee of the National Congress:

Vice-president, Region III, Mrs. Ralph Hobbs, Cataula, Georgia

Vice-president, Region V, Mrs. Ruth Gagliardo, Lawrence, Kansas

Vice-president, Region VII, Mrs. Jennelle Moorhead, Eugene, Oregon

Vice-president, Region VIII, Mrs. L. E. Burr, Las Vegas, Nevada

Each of these persons has accepted the nomination, and each is well qualified to serve the Congress in a post of great responsibility.

Members of the nominating committee are Mrs. David W. Wood, Washington, chairman; Mrs. L. W. Alston, Mississippi; Mrs. Harold Honohan, Iowa; Joseph A. Hunter, Maryland; Mrs. Albert Solomon, Colorado.

1956 CONVENTION

• The 1956 convention of the National Congress will be held in San Francisco, California, on May 20, 21, 22, 23.

• See the April issue of **National Congress Bulletin** for additional information about the convention.

The Family and the Community:



Each shapes the other . . . the P.T.A. serves both

EACH OF US LIVES in a family; each family lives in a community. The more we strengthen the one, the more we safeguard the other. Never have we been more keenly aware than we are today of that interlocking relationship. Nor have we ever realized more fully than we do today that to serve children and youth the parent-teacher association must effectively serve both the home and the community.

This Action Program was drawn up to help us identify problems and objectives of utmost importance to the family and the community, and to suggest projects and activities for attacking them. In short, it is a guide to parent-teacher program making.

No organization is more productive or creative than is its entire program of work. Hence our task today, as always, is to build programs that are sharply focused, that are related to the realities we face, and that result in tangible achievements for families and communities.

The theme of this administration was fashioned to help us conduct successfully the most important business in the whole world—the building of future citizens strong in body, healthy in mind, and free in spirit.

Problems and objectives + projects and activities = an action program.

The Family

Problems and Objectives

- To provide parent and family life education so that parents may gain self-insight and the knowledge needed to understand their children, enjoy them, and wisely guide their growth.

Projects and Activities

- At regular meetings present informative, practical programs on parent-child relations and on specific topics, such as discipline; methods of teaching reading; health and safety; and the effects of comic books, motion pictures, and TV programs.

Surveys, check lists, or questionnaires can be used to determine members' interests. "New Hope for Audiences"* will assure varied and stimulating meetings in which all members participate.

Organize and conduct study-discussion groups.

Set up a special bookshelf of useful publications on the guidance of children and youth.

Promote the use of the *National Parent-Teacher*, especially the parent education study courses, as program material for study-discussion groups.

*All publications marked with an asterisk are publications of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

Problems and Objectives

- To strengthen study-discussion groups by securing competently trained lay leaders and resource persons.

- To organize more preschool sections of parent-teacher associations and strengthen existing ones.

- To organize more high school parent-teacher associations and strengthen existing ones.



- To make the parent-teacher association ever more widely representative of all the families in each school area.

- To foster the character development and spiritual education of children, with emphasis on moral and spiritual values.

Projects and Activities

- Seek out members who show special leadership abilities and urge them to secure the training that will qualify them as lay leaders for parent and family life education groups.

The P.T.A. might pay, in whole or in part, the expenses of potential leaders attending leadership training workshops.

Encourage professional men and women to serve study-discussion groups as consultants or resource persons.

- Recommend that every elementary school parent-teacher association organize a preschool section, and urge parents of young children to enroll.

The procedures to be followed are given on pages 25-29 of the pamphlet "Organizing a P.T.A."*

Make sure that mothers of small children will be able to attend meetings by providing nursery service during each meeting or a corps of volunteer baby sitters.

Advise all parents of preschool children to subscribe to the *National Parent-Teacher*.

- Stimulate the organizing of high school P.T.A.'s.

Stress the fact that adolescents want and need continued understanding as well as their parents' interest in their activities.

Assist groups of interested parents and teachers in organizing a high school unit; enlist the cooperation of the principal and superintendent.

For detailed information consult "Working with Youth Through the High School P.T.A.,"* pages 56-57.

Encourage the newly organized group to observe effective high school P.T.A.'s at work in nearby communities.

Evaluate the present program of your high school parent-teacher association. If necessary, broaden the scope of this program so that it is geared to the real concerns and interests of students and their parents.

Since it is highly desirable to involve high school students in the P.T.A., consult *Working with Youth Through the High School P.T.A.*,* Chapter 5, for patterns of student participation.

- Analyze the working program of your P.T.A., and make sure that it is varied and challenging enough to attract diverse groups in the community.

See that temporary residents and newcomers to the community are invited to join the P.T.A. Encourage migratory workers to participate in P.T.A. activities.

Make systematic plans to attract members who do not attend parent-teacher meetings.

The time and place of meetings should be considered as well as types of projects, baby-sitting problems, and the like.

- Encourage families to turn to their churches and synagogues for guidance in teaching children the moral and ethical values stressed by their faith.

Suggest that parents invite their clergymen and their children's Sunday school teachers to visit their homes and help plan family worship services.

Plan programs that show, in a dramatic way, how moral and spiritual convictions may be both transmitted and exemplified in daily living at home, in school, on the job, and in the community.

Refer to "Moral and Spiritual Education in Home, School, and Community"* for a discussion of this subject and for practical program suggestions.

Problems and Objectives

- To advocate more education for family living—with the subject matter adapted to the students' interest and understanding—in school programs all the way from the primary grades through college.

- To encourage family recreation and stress its importance in developing family solidarity.

- To work toward preventing broken homes and disruptions of family life.

- To provide spokesmen and a forum for calling the community's attention to problems affecting its families.

- To keep parents informed about community services for families and children, and work to improve these services.



Projects and Activities

- Cooperate with school personnel to extend and deepen community understanding of the need for family life education in the schools.

Support efforts to incorporate such education into the curriculum.

See that parents become familiar with the school's program of family life education so that they may correlate their children's home activities with what is being taught in the school.

- Offer programs or workshops to give parents ideas and skills for indoor and outdoor activities, hobbies, and other kinds of family fun.

Revive such family-shared experiences as impromptu dramatics, reading aloud, singing together, and playing musical instruments.

Informal and interesting dinner-table conversation, in which children as well as adults join, is a characteristically American practice that should be fostered by every family.

Encourage the establishment of recreational facilities in parks, playgrounds, and community centers where whole families may go together to participate in group activities or to pursue individual interests.

- Assist family service agencies, churches, and mental health clinics in their efforts to expand and strengthen their family counseling and other services.

Help parents to understand the value of using family counseling services on problems that threaten the stability of the home.

Recommend that courts attempt to reconcile couples seeking divorce (perhaps through a "cooling-off" period) and that professional counselors be provided for this purpose.

Support adequate public aid to families whose homes are threatened by unemployment, illness, or desertion of the wage earner.

- At meetings of the community coordinating council and other lay-professional groups in which the P.T.A. is represented, express vigorously the opinions and concerns of families and children.

Sponsor a conference of community organizations to discuss the unmet needs of families in the community and what the P.T.A. and other groups might do about these needs.

- Cooperate with the council of social agencies in publicizing the services of its member groups. If there is no such council, find out what public and private agencies in the community serve families and children—for example, the local public health department's maternal and child health services, mental health clinics, youth-serving organizations. If the community is too small or remote to provide any of these services, find out the nearest town or city in which they are available. (There is a special need for parents to know where they may turn for help when a child is seriously disturbed.)

Prepare a directory of these organizations and agencies, and distribute it as widely as funds permit.

Make known the need for in-service educational programs that will enable physicians, nurses, clergymen, and public welfare agency caseworkers to counsel parents about child psychology and family relations.

Compile a guide for newcomers to the community, giving such essential information as the names and addresses of churches, hospitals, social agencies, libraries, recreational facilities, public utility companies, and the various municipal departments.

The Community

EDUCATION

Problems and Objectives

- To increase public efforts—local, state, and national—to meet the rapidly expanding educational needs of children and youth.

Fruitful action is most likely if we break down this problem into six component problems, as did the White House Conference on Education. Every P.T.A. can choose for intensive action the unsolved or most critical problems in its own community.

The six subproblems follow:

Problem 1

- To determine what the community wants its schools to accomplish.



Problem 2

- To find ways in which school systems can be organized more efficiently and economically.

Projects and Activities

- Promote the widest possible circulation of state and national White House Conference reports. See that there are copies in the public library, in the school library, and on the P.T.A. bookshelf.

Play a leading role in plans and preparations for continuous follow-up conferences, community and state-wide.

The purposes of these conferences are to sustain the public interest in education created by the White House Conference and to stimulate local and state action on Conference recommendations.

Make a continuing study of proposed local, state, and federal legislation concerned with education and schools. Create interest in these measures through discussions at P.T.A. meetings and through well-timed publicity. Operating within the framework of your state congress' policies, see that such needed legislation is enacted.

- Organize a committee of leading citizens and representatives of community groups, the school board, and school staffs to sponsor a public conference on the objectives of the schools. Ask the school board and school administration to provide a panel of qualified persons to describe what goals the schools are currently working for. Then ask the audience, through buzz sessions, to list the essential elements of a good educational program for their community—a program that assures the development of all children. Compare these lists with the goals set forth in the White House Conference reports.

Suggest that the school board involve the community in a periodic examination of school goals and report the results at community-wide meetings. If the board does not report annually to the community on the aims and activities of the school system, urge that this practice be adopted.

For a regular monthly meeting, plan a program on the kind of professional preparation the community expects teacher education institutions to provide. Invite a faculty member from a nearby teachers' college or school of education to describe the program that his institution offers.

- Initiate the formation of a special community-wide committee to study school organization in your community and state. (This might be done through the council of parent-teacher associations in your city, county, or area.) Each member or subgroup of the committee might concentrate on one of the following:

1. The recommendations on organization made in the state and national White House Conference reports.
2. The present and future size of the school-age population; the size of the school district; the adequacy of taxable resources; the effect of these on the school program, teacher supply and salaries, building needs, per-pupil costs, and pupil transportation.
3. Existing state statutes on redistricting; the status, functions, and method of selection of the school board; school board and school administration relations with the community; the state aid program; the services, functions, and powers of the state education department.
4. How changes can be made—for example, by legislative action, school board action, action by the state education department, and so on.

After the committee has prepared a report of its findings and recommendations, hold a public meeting to discuss the report.

Problem 3

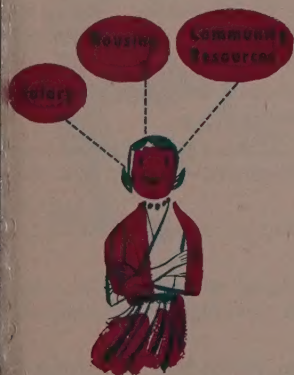
- To determine school building needs.

The U.S. Office of Education reported on November 30, 1955, that there were 2,385,000 pupils above the normal capacity of the buildings occupied. The National Education Association reported in January 1956 a national shortage of 95,000 classrooms.

The general consensus of the White House Conference on Education was this: "No state represented has a demonstrated financial incapacity to build the schools it will need during the next five years. But, with the exception of a few states, none of the states presently has plans which indicate a political determination powerful enough to overcome all the obstacles."

Problem 4

- To get enough good teachers—and keep them.



- Find out from the school board whether a study of current and future building needs has been made recently. If not, propose that a study be undertaken.

Make a study of all possible ways to finance whatever school construction is necessary, now and in the next several years. Find out what obstacles, other than financial capacity, stand in the way of meeting construction needs, and discuss how these obstacles may be overcome.

Some frequently encountered obstacles include community resistance to higher taxes, obsolete building codes, state restrictions on borrowing power, and rigid state regulations for school buildings.

Draw up a brief questionnaire asking for opinions on who should have a voice in the planning of a new building (for example, parents and other laymen, the school staff, the student body). Circulate the questionnaire widely and report the results to the school board.

Devote all or part of one meeting to a discussion of the better and wider use of school buildings.

Some state laws provide for evening, holiday, and week-end use of buildings by civic, educational, and recreational groups. Certain communities either have or are planning a twelve-month school year.

Develop a set of standards for selection of school sites and for basic and desirable facilities in a school building. Present your opinions to the school board.

- Collaborate with the school board, school administrators, and teachers in a joint study of the salaries and wages offered by all occupations in the community, with a view to establishing teachers' salaries that compete favorably with those paid to workers in other fields.

Study and discuss the tenure and retirement provisions offered teachers in your community, as well as living and working conditions, opportunities for professional growth, recognition of special merit, and so on.

Plan various ways of creating increased public appreciation of the worth and dignity of the teaching profession and of securing for teachers the prestige accorded members of other professions.

For example, emphasize (through press, radio, television, and other publicity channels) the high qualifications demanded of good teachers: broad general education, interest in children, skill in human relations, emotional stability, and professional competence.

Sponsor community programs to honor local teachers who have performed unusual and outstanding services.

Establish a special committee whose function will be to welcome new teachers, help them find places to live, and acquaint them with the community's social, cultural, and recreational resources.

Confer with the school guidance personnel on ways of making the teaching profession attractive to able high school seniors. Discuss these suggestions at a P.T.A. meeting, and poll the members informally to find out how many have children who are planning to become teachers. Urge the formation of Future Teachers clubs.

Work with the school on a long-range plan to identify early in their school career those boys and girls who would benefit from a college education. Support strong counseling programs that will encourage young people to enter college. See that the counseling services extend also to the parents so that they may be made aware of their children's abilities.

At least 50 per cent of the nation's brightest young people never get to college. If we are to relieve our present serious shortage of college-trained manpower, in scientific fields as well as in teaching, we cannot afford this waste of gifted young minds.

Appoint a committee of men members, including several school officials, to encourage more young men to choose teaching as their profession.

Support and publicize your state congress' scholarship and student-aid programs for young people who are planning to enter the teaching profession.

Problems and Objectives

Projects and Activities

Problem 5

- To finance our schools adequately, providing funds for both new construction and operating costs.

Request your state congress to include in summer workshop programs a discussion of teacher education, with emphasis on the need for giving students a broad liberal-arts background, practical classroom experiences, and a lasting enthusiasm for teaching as a career.

Initiate or take part in surveys to discover qualified former teachers who might be brought back into the profession after taking "refresher" courses.

- In cooperation with other community organizations, sponsor a study-discussion group on school finance. For the final meeting plan a panel or forum on such a topic as "Where Is the Money Coming From?" or "How Can We Pay the School Bill?"

Excellent resource persons can be found in every community—bankers, lawyers, accountants, school board members, economics and political science teachers, and school administrators.

Propose that the school board appoint a citizens' committee to make a study of the immediate and future financial requirements of the school system and of the methods of meeting them.

The committee's tasks might involve an examination of state restrictions on local borrowing and taxing powers to see whether they hamper local efforts unnecessarily; an exploration of the property taxes; an evaluation of property assessment practices; a study of the adequacy of the state aid program.

Urge the school board to hold open hearings on the school budget and to issue financial reports in the form of graphic, easily understood leaflets. Help to publicize the hearings and to secure wide circulation of the reports.

Suggest, through the publicity chairman, that local newspapers carry a series of articles on school finance.

Problem 6

- To obtain a continuing public interest in education.



- Work with the school board and school administrators to involve more citizens in school affairs. If there is no lay advisory committee on education in the community, request board members and administrators to consider forming such a consultative group.

Devise practical ways of actually bringing citizens into their schools, such as holding adult education classes there. Cooperate in sponsoring American Education Week, business-industry-education days, parents' nights, school open-house nights, and similar events.

Urge that school board meetings be open to the public, and send a P.T.A. representative, preferably from a council, to each meeting.

Work with the school in developing a program of teacher-parent conferences and home visits and in making use of community resources—human and material—to enrich pupils' learning.

Encourage the community as a whole to give recognition to outstanding students comparable to that given to star athletes.

Advocate the use of additional channels for educational television, and commend commercial radio and TV stations for their coverage of educational problems and events.

Periodically assess the value of your P.T.A. program to see how effectively it channels the people's interest in their schools and guides that interest toward higher goals of achievement and public service.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Problems and Objectives

- To improve health services in the community.

Projects and Activities

- Find out whether the local public health department is well staffed—with a health officer, public health nurse, sanitary engineer, secretary, and other essential personnel—and adequately financed to carry on its activities. If the department needs more money for its work, promote public support of measures to secure additional funds.

Make a special study of the local health services offered by the community to children of all ages, and work to improve these services if they are deficient in any way.

Problems and Objectives

• To arouse greater public interest in mental health and in effective methods of preventing and treating mental illness.

• To promote health education among all citizens, young and old.

• To assure a safer community.



Projects and Activities

Support state and federal legislation providing funds for local public health units, maternal and child health services, and services for crippled children.

Take whatever steps are needed to inform parents of the kinds of medical services available to infants and children in the community.

Ideally every infant and child should have access to the services of private physicians, dentists, and clinics (or, in certain situations, school medical and dental advisers); public health officers; and other local medical and health facilities.

Support programs of mental health education and services for the mentally ill.

• Survey mental health services in the community (child guidance clinics, mental health clinics, family counseling agencies, psychiatric clinics, and so on). Consult with health and welfare officials to discover what facilities are lacking or inadequate, and enlist the efforts of community groups to supply these needs.

If a community is too small or lacks resources to support any of these services, find out whether there are traveling clinics available through state agencies or the state university. Another possibility is for several communities or counties to establish a joint facility.

• Plan to devote at least one program a year to the importance of health supervision for children, including periodic examinations by the child's own physician, the correction or treatment of defects, and immunization against disease.

If the Summer Round-Up program has not been taken over by a local health agency, continue to conduct this special P.T.A. project, so that all children entering first grade will have had physical examinations. Follow-up checks should be made to make sure remediable defects have been corrected.

Urge the school board and school administrators to include health education in the school program, throughout all twelve grades.

• Survey the community to see whether legislation is needed to protect children from hazards such as unused wells; abandoned buildings; iceboxes and airtight chests; unprotected quarries and pits; and irrigation ditches in residential areas.

Set up a program of home safety, with special emphasis on reducing the high rate of accidental poisoning among children.

Promote the enforcement of fire prevention laws and of safety provisions in building codes. Work with the school in its safety program, particularly driver education courses. Cooperate with public agencies and other voluntary organizations in a traffic safety program and also in programs for water safety and first aid.

For guidance in conducting these projects, refer to "Signals for Safety."*

Cooperate with the schools and other public authorities in carrying out civil defense programs.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Problems and Objectives

• To secure adequate facilities, services, and laws for the protection of children and youth.

Projects and Activities

• Take a good look at your community to see how well its social agencies are protecting children and youth. If these services are inadequate, enlist public support for needed improvements.

Propose that the community establish machinery for periodic reviews of local ordinances and state laws pertaining to juvenile welfare. The reviews would be made by a committee of lawyers, social workers, clergymen, educators, and other citizens whose purpose would be to find out whether any legislation should be revised and to prepare recommendations for needed changes.

Suggest also that a cooperative committee, representing business, labor, education, the P.T.A., and law-enforcement authorities, be set up to study child labor laws and their enforcement in the community.

Find out whether your police regularly patrol such potential danger spots as parks, dance halls, taverns, poolrooms, and night clubs. Cooperate with the police in calling public attention to demoralizing influences and conditions.

- To provide adequate protective services for children who are dependent, neglected, or exposed to unwholesome influences.

- To get at the facts of juvenile delinquency in the community, report on them, and arouse the public to take steps to improve whatever facilities and practices are not up to standard.



Promote a community program to prevent molestation of children by sex offenders.

Report on provisions that have been made to care for the children of mothers who must work. If day-care centers and after-school programs are lacking or insufficient, recommend ways of making the needed care available.

If your community has no coordinating council, take the lead in getting one.

The council should be a fact-finding group that discovers community needs through its broadly representative membership and spurs action on these needs.

If your community has a coordinating council, urge that all agencies concerned with the welfare of children and their families be represented on it.

- Consult with members of the local child welfare or other social agencies, public and private, and prepare a report on what help is available to children who need temporary foster care. Are there enough private homes or boarding homes to provide foster care for children removed from their families? Or must these boys and girls be put in detention homes along with delinquents?

In the same way survey and report on the family casework services available to assist parents who for one reason or another have neglected their children. Are there enough well-trained caseworkers to help parents work out their own emotional problems?

Ask members of several social agencies to participate in a panel discussion on preventing juvenile delinquency. The discussion should stress the psychological and psychiatric services needed by children who are emotionally disturbed because of indifference, neglect, or abuse from their families. It should also throw light on whatever improvements in community facilities and personnel are desirable and how these can be secured.

Child guidance clinics, child and family casework agencies, foster homes, and specialized-treatment institutions should be available to the families of every community. These resources offer parents and children the services needed to prevent family disorganization as well as delinquency and crime.

- Inquire whether or not your police department has officers trained to work with juveniles, particularly delinquents. If it has none, talk with the head of the department about the possibility of arranging specialized training for as many officers as are needed in this work.

Get information on the role of probation officers in handling juvenile offenders. Do probation officers make wide use of new techniques for releasing children to their parents? Find out what practices would be most beneficial for your community program.

Confer with the head of the probation officers about where children are held in custody for court action. Are they kept in a city or county jail, along with adult criminals, in private boarding homes, or in a detention home? If they are sent to a detention home, make arrangements to have a small group of parent-teacher members visit this center.

An adequate detention home should (1) provide the children with good physical care and adequate, skilled supervision; (2) create opportunities for observing each child and sending a full report on him to the juvenile court; and (3) meet the children's emotional needs.

Learn all you can about the competency of your juvenile court. Does it have a sufficient number of well-trained probation officers? What kind of social, medical, and psychiatric services are available to it? What improvements does your court want help on?

Have a small committee report on training schools in your state—their aims, program, problems, and needs—and on what happens to the young people after they leave the schools. Does your community recognize its responsibility for helping these boys and girls reestablish themselves as useful members of society?

Through the community coordinating council, or in cooperation with other civic groups, sponsor a conference or series of conferences to discuss your findings and propose ways of getting strong, informed public action to bring about recommended changes.

RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Problems and Objectives

- To make sure that the community provides its citizens—and especially its youth—with abundant opportunities for cultural advancement and wholesome recreation.

Because the length of the workweek in America is being continuously shortened by the development of automation, communities must give increasingly serious attention to the leisure-time needs of adults and youth alike.



Projects and Activities

- Draw up a list of recreational programs and facilities that would be found in an ideal community. Include provisions for elderly people, the handicapped, and those in need of recreational therapy. With the aid of such specialists as park and playground personnel, sports directors, leaders of youth organizations, and social workers, compare this list with what the community now offers. Discuss in realistic terms which of the programs on the "ideal" list can be added to those already in existence. Plan a step-by-step campaign to arouse community-wide interest in setting up these needed programs.

Support the schools in the development of a broadly conceived program to educate students in the creative use of leisure time.

Cooperate with other groups in sponsoring community classes in painting, sculpture, ceramics, and weaving; theater workshops, orchestras, and choral groups; and other creative activities.

Study the various adult education programs offered by local schools and colleges, youth-serving organizations, churches, civic and service groups, and community agencies. If these programs are meager or limited, discuss ways of expanding them. Then take the initiative in following through.

In many communities the parent-teacher associations, either individually or through their council, have organized and conducted flourishing adult education programs. A poll of members' interests usually determines the scope of the program, which may include subjects ranging from nutrition to philosophy.

Work with other groups to bring lectures, concerts, good motion pictures, and traveling art exhibits to the community.

Support the public library and also state and federal legislation to expand local library services.

Confer with youth leaders and with high school students about the possibility of giving young people greater opportunities to work with other citizens on community projects.

Alert the community to the need for professional personnel in the field of recreation and insist on the employment of such properly trained leaders.

Cooperate with other organizations in providing workshops to train volunteer recreation and youth-group leaders.

Work with community planning boards to assure ample recreational facilities for the family. Resist efforts to use parks, playgrounds, and forest preserves for nonrecreational purposes.

CIVIC CONCERN

Problems and Objectives

- To develop in all the citizens of the community a strong and informed sense of civic responsibility.

Projects and Activities

- Take part in "Register and Vote" campaigns.

Share in sponsoring public forums at which legislative action is discussed and candidates are interviewed, being careful to adhere to the nonpartisan policy of the National Congress.

Intensify all efforts to keep members informed on pending legislation affecting children and youth, schools, and families.

See that the P.T.A.—with its variety of opportunities for practicing responsible citizenship—offers its teacher members the means whereby they may enter fully into the civic life of the community.

- To give young people more chance, both at home and in school, to learn about democracy, and more firsthand experience in the practice of it.



THIS IS THE PROGRAM of an organization that from the beginning has been family-minded and that over the years has become more and more community-minded.

This is a program built on years of tested experience and rooted deep in the Objects of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

- It mirrors the best of current ideas on the problems of family and community life.
- It calls for continuing study, continuing analysis.
- It requires continued cooperation with other citizen groups who also want to assure America's children the care, protection, and education that are the right of all children.

This is a program of projects that have evolved from parent-teacher members—their thinking, their caring, their aspirations, their considered conclusions; projects that have a direct and immediate bearing on the welfare of the nation.

What will it take to carry out this program? First of all, conviction—the conviction that we parents, teachers,

Analyze the obstacles to informed participation in civic affairs and suggest ways of overcoming each one.

Encourage intergroup relations that are characterized by mutual respect, understanding, and cordiality.

- Devote a program or two to ways in which parents together with their children can discuss public affairs and demonstrate their civic concern.

Help organize community projects that enable high school youth to take part in civic affairs as co-workers with adults.

The P.T.A. itself offers unique opportunities for directing the creative energies of youth toward community betterment.

Work with the schools to see that good citizenship education programs are part of the elementary and high school curriculums.

Discuss with schoolteachers and administrators the importance of giving young people a knowledge of the structure and operation of their school system. One or more units on the school and its relationship to our free, American, competitive society might be included in civics and social science courses.

Welcome exchange students, teachers, and other foreign visitors into our homes and help them to see what the American way of life really is.

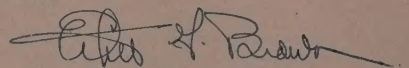
and friends of children can determine the quality of day-to-day living in our homes and our communities.

But conviction alone is not enough. Conviction alone can never give us the kind of homes and communities that make for wholesome childhood and responsible adulthood. As individuals and as group members we must act on what we believe.

But even conviction and action are not enough. Uninformed action, however well intentioned, carries grave risks. A third requirement of this program of work is study. As an organization we subscribe to action that is preceded by fact-finding and searching study.

And this program will fare best wherever we are willing to venture the new, to open wide the doors of creative imagination.

This is a program not for yesterday but for today—and tomorrow.


MRS. ROLLIN BROWN, President
National Congress of Parents and Teachers

The Family
and the
Community

